

News Release



J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge
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Marion County Student Wins 2006 Florida Junior Duck Stamp Contest

The Federal Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program is soaring high in schools throughout Florida. This year, 1,447 children from 80 Florida schools and homeschoolers participated in this national contest. The program increased this year by 450 entries! The Jr. Duck Stamp Contest is a take off of the annual Federal Duck Stamp competition started by J.N. "Ding" Darling in 1934. Last year, over 50,000 students from all 50 states learned the importance of wetland environments to waterfowl and other wildlife while participating in the Jr. Duck Stamp art contest.

"Bufflehead Pair" is the title of the 2006 Best of Show winning painting of the Florida Junior Duck Stamp Contest. The artwork was painted by 18 year old Amanda Tempesta of Ocala, Florida and depicts a pair of Buffleheads sitting on the water. "Even at this very moment it still amazes me. That I was capable of obtaining such an honor is just incredible," stated Amanda. Her artwork will represent Florida on April 20, 2006 in Washington, D.C. at the National Junior Duck Stamp contest alongside 50 other state entries. If Amanda's entry places in the top three at the national level she will earn a free trip to Washington, D.C. for herself, a parent, and her art teacher. The first place national winner also receives \$5,000 cash, and their entry is made into a \$5.00 stamp that is sold nationwide by the U.S. Postal Service!

Amanda attends West Port High School in Ocala, Florida. With guidance from her teacher, Nina Lovill, she out competed over 1,400 students for this prestigious title.

"Amanda is abounding with talent, she is so deserving" said Lovill her art teacher. According to Amanda's mother, Kathleen, she drove over 100 miles to get the winning art postmarked in time to meet the deadline! Amanda's conservation message on her winning artwork sums up her ideas of conservation: "Nature is the mother of us all."

An awards ceremony will be held to honor all 100 winners from four age categories on Sanibel Island at the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge Education Center on Saturday, May 6, 2006. New this year will be an "Artists Workshop" sponsored by wildlife artist Ernie Simmons from Dunedin, Florida for students from 10-noon. Following this event is the Awards ceremony for the Top 100 winners from 1-3 pm. Winning students will receive ribbons and prizes sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society.

The winning artwork will be on display at the Ding Darling Refuge Education Center for the entire year. This year the traveling exhibit will be sent around the state to other National Wildlife Refuges and art galleries throughout the state.



2006 Florida Junior Duck Stamp Winner